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SPRING BLOOMS...

CELEBRATING A GRAND FLORAL PARADE IN ST. JOSEPH AND BENTON HARBOR

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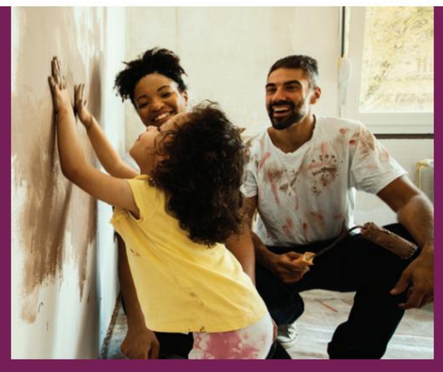
PHOTO OF THE BERRIEN COUNTY SHERIFF'S HONOR GUARD MARCHING IN THE PARADE BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Goals are dreams with *confidence.*



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Double track grand opening draws governor

BY STAN MADDUX

Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb took a South Shore commuter train from Michigan City to Gary Monday, May 13, to take part in a ribbon cutting for the new double track, which makes traveling to Chicago by rail about 30 faster.

Holcomb about 10 a.m. boarded the passenger car at the new Michigan City train station, which features an eight-car platform at 11th and Franklin streets.

"Today marks a day of celebration," he said.

Holcomb also said the double track and other improvements have greatly modernized a line in desperate need of upgrading for decades.

Fourteen additional train cars have been added to increase the number of trips and accommodate an expected increase in ridership.

"We're not only going to have a lot more runs every day but the quality of the travel is second to none," he said.

The new train schedule, which reflects quicker travel times to and from Chicago, will go into effect on Tuesday.

"It's almost surreal to think that we're actually here after all of the years of trying to get this going," said Mike Noland, president of the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, which operates the commuter line.

A significant increase in economic activity is anticipated from a projected increase in passengers taking advantage of one way trips by train to and from Michigan City being 30 minutes quicker. .

Construction has already begun on three towers that will contain a hotel, condominiums and apartments on Michigan City's north side when completed.

Noland said quicker travel was achieved mostly from trains no longer having to stop to wait for trains ahead of them on a single line finish picking up and unloading passengers at a number of stations along the way.

He said additional time was saved by transforming some of the curves into longer straightaways to reduce the number of slowdowns.

Noland said the double track has been in the railroad's strategic plan since 2014.

He said milestones achieved to make it reality included securing state and federal funding to pay for most of the over $600 million project.

"Those were huge hurdles," he said.

Noland said it's difficult to know when the expected surge in ridership will happen but quicker travel on the double track is being advertised in this part of the state.

He also strongly feels word about the faster times will spread into the Chicago area through social media.

"I really do believe we're going to see tremendous spikes in ridership," he said.

Officials also believe the lakefront, Blue Chip Casino and the Indiana Dunes National Park are among the other attractions in the Michigan City area that will help draw more visitors from the Chicago area because of the quicker travel.

La Porte County Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Jack Arnett said his organization will help promote the quicker train travel to the masses right away to bring in more visitors.

In addition, Arnett said his group will inform visitors attending several day long conventions at Blue Chip about the quicker travel to Chicago so they can do things there and return by train to resume their stay in Michigan City.

Arnett said he suspects quicker travel by train will have an immediate positive economic impact on Michigan City and increase further over time.

"There's no doubt this is going to move the needle for us. I can't image any other outcome," he said.

***It's tough to know yourself if you don't know the character of others.* —**
Dino N. Fatouros

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

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JOHN HUMPHREY, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
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City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, JACK ROGERS
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, BRADLEY BURNER, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, BILL MARSKE
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday October thru March at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN, JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

Chikaming Township recognizes retiring assistant fire chief

DISCUSSES LEAF BLOWER ORDINANCE

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Public safety took center stage at the Chikaming Township Board of Trustees meeting Thursday, May 9.

Retiring assistant fire chief Nick Oldenburg was recognized for his 35 years of service with a plaque.

Fire chief Allen Weich said that Oldenburg has also assisted in Lake Township.

"From a young firefighter that I was, Nick was somebody who you wanted to pay attention to what he was doing, the things he was getting involved with... The changes that were happening in this community were because of this gentleman here," he said.

Justin Hageman and his children participate in a pinning ceremony

Board members also approved the hiring of Justin Hageman as full-time police officer. Police chief Todd Tylor said that he comes from Oregon, where he spent several years in law enforcement.

The hiring of Alicia Messer and Brian Burkhard as reserve officers was also approved. Taylor said that Messer will be enforcing parking in the township, which includes the beaches.

Board members decided not to pursue a leaf blower ordinance.

Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte said it was brought to his attention by a resident to consider an ordinance regarding the use of gas leaf blowers.

Trustee Bill Marske asked how the township would police such an ordinance, adding that people who come from other areas to perform yard work will also have to be made aware of it.

Paula Dudiak said that the township is in a rural area, and "what's good for one may not be good for three or four others."

"There's some places where there's houses that are right next to each other and you're going to blow it into it but my situation where I'm at - no one's going to hear it, " she said.

She added that it might also affect the livelihood of some local people.

Rich Sullivan asked if they should be concerned about gas powered snow blowers and lawn mowers, or even the spring peepers in his pond that can reach 100 decibels.

"Because we're in a rural area, there's a lot of things that we have," he said.

Bunte said that he hopes that people would start with the township's noise ordinance and call the police if people are running the blowers after hours.

"For an environmentally conscious community, I think it's something we need to be mindful of," he said, adding that there could be other options to promote the use of non gas blowers other than with an ordinance.

Board members approved Bunte signing Antero Group's contract for their Safe Streets For All Grant Comprehensive Action Plan.

The township was awarded the $120,000 federal grant, which included a $30,000 match for a total of $150,000.

Bunte said the plan will involve getting public input on non motorized pathways, sidewalk accessibility and interchanges as well as from agencies such as the Berrien County Road Department on "traffic plan, traffic safety, planning for the future," all of which will "roll over into an action plan for the township when it come to transportation safety."

A proposal from Arndt Asphalt for township parking lot repairs and restriping was approved.

Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens. — *Jimi Hendrix*

Assistant fire chief Nick Oldenburg is honored for 35 years of service

Bunte said that there's deterioration around most of the drains and it's recommended that the deteriorated asphalt be removed and concrete be built there, with the estimated cost for asphalt being $28,900. Regarding replacing the concrete around the drains, the wire mesh is an additional $11,700 for a total cost of $40,600.

Board members approved Bunte signing off on a bid approval from the road department for the Lakeside Road, Pier Street and East Road Construction and Streetscape Project.

Bunte said the road department's cost for the entire project is $150,000. The cost for the township's water department for the waterline replacement on Pier is $187,593 and the township's portion is $631,625, which includes the road work that the township has already budgeted for within this year's road budget. He added that the township has budgeted approximately $400,000 for those three road projects for this year and the remaining $230,625 would be paid from the General Fund and could then be reimbursed in the 2025-26 budget.

Bunte said that, as of May 9, the road department is nearing semi-completion of construction on Red Arrow Highway from Community Hall Road to U.S. Highway 12 and that it may be opening within the next week or two. Upcoming summer projects include the road and streetscape one in Lakeside, Warren Woods Road construction that will begin in mid to late June and Harbert Road in July.

Board members approved appointing Jim Gormley to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Fireworks permit applications for Woodlawn Beach for July 6 and the Chikaming Country Club for July 5 were approved.

Rare Aurora sighting at Townline Road Beach taken Friday May 9 in Union Pier

BY HILLARY STIFLER

A brand new Civic Auditorium in LaPorte

BY STAN MADDUX

The Civic Auditorium in La Porte is like brand new but its beloved atmosphere remains historic.

A $6.1 million modernization over the past three years included the first time use of air conditioning recently on the main level of the building erected in 1929.

The air conditioning system was installed to have more major events during the summer and keep cool a building that can become a little too warm at heavily attended major events even during the winter.

"It makes the building more user friendly year round," said Civic Auditorium Director Brett Binversie.

The addition of air conditioning along with a new, more efficient heating system marked the completion of the renovation paid for entirely from the $11 million the city received in federal American Rescue Plan monies.

ARP funds went to communities nationwide to help in the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other upgrades last year included replacing the original all wooden seats in the balcony with wider cushioned plastic framed seats containing drink holders.

Binversie said the balcony contains 1,160 seats in the balcony.

The aisles and steps in the balcony were also made wider with hand rails installed for the safety of spectators navigating to and from their seats.

Another 600 to 1,500 people can be seated on the floor.

The work started in 2021 by placing a new roof on the building.

LED lighting was then installed throughout the structure, which improved the quality of the lighting and efficiency, he said.

Binversie said there were also upgrades to the sound system, allowing bands and other musical performers to use less of their own audio equipment and perform with better acoustics.

He said the primary reason for the investment was to host more revenue generating major events at the Civic and extend its life as an important facility for more community related functions.

"It really makes the Civic a little more ready for the next 100 years," he said.

Shortly after taking office in 2020, Mayor Tom Dermody made the Civic Auditorium one of his top priorities in response to a desire for more things to do locally.

Dermody said he felt the upgrades were necessary to get more use out of the facility and for spectators to want to come back for future events.

"It wasn't meant to be a museum. It was meant to be used," he said.

He also wanted to preserve a piece of the city's heritage,

The Civic Auditorium was built and donated to the city for public use by the locally prominent Fox family, who once ran the Fox Woolen Mills for several decades beginning in the late 1800's.

Over the years, the Civic Auditorium has hosted anything from weddings, high school proms and multiple concerts annually by the La Porte County Symphony Orchestra.

Occasionally, there have been major entertainers ranging from the late comedian Bob Hope to former and current country music superstars Randy Travis, Sara Evans and Clint Black.

There's also been a lot of concerts over the past two years from tribute bands, who dress and sound very similar to the original performers.

A Jimmy Buffet tribute band, for example, played on May 11 and a Van Halen tribute band is scheduled for May 31.

A Neil Diamond tribute concert is set for June 9.

For the past three years, the facility has also hosted an ESPN televised basketball invitational featuring the top college prep school talent in the country.

Another goal of the investment is to make the Civic Auditorium totally self-sufficient.

Binversie said the amount of tax dollars used to fund the facility has dropped from about $297,000 in 2020 to $68,000 this year.

"The Civic is a one of a kind and we need to take care of what we have. We're certainly doing that with the Civic Auditorium," Dermody said.

SCHOOL OF AMERICAN MUSIC TO OFFER SUMMER MUSIC AND LITERACY CLASSES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS

Registration is now underway for two sessions of early childhood music and literacy education at School of American Music, Arts and Education Center, located at 14 Maple Street in Three Oaks.

The courses will start Tuesday, July 2, and will continue on consecutive Tuesdays through Aug. 6.

The first course, "Music Makers and Learning Lovers," for 3 to 5 year olds will meet at 10 a.m. for 40 minutes. The students will enjoy singing and will engage in book reading and activities around a new theme each week as presented by the theme in the chosen book. The second course "Reading, Writing, Rockin' and Rhyming," for 6 to 8 years olds will include similar types of activities with the addition of a writing prompt. Music, games, crafts and movement will fill out the 60 minute classes, which will begin at 11 a.m.

The cost for the courses is $60 per student for all six sessions payable at the first class. A healthy scholarship program will be available from 50% to 100% for families who want to take advantage of this opportunity but need help with resources to do so. No child should be left out because of the cost.

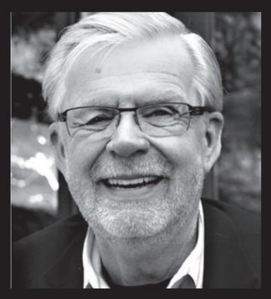
The music and literacy classes will be led by Kendra Job and Madison Kutch, both elementary teachers for Michigan City Area Schools. Job is a classroom teacher and Kutch is an elementary music educator. Kutch is also an instructor at School of American Music as a brass specialist. Both teachers have had much success in their chosen fields and have a huge heart for students and student learning.

"Being in the same room with Kendra and Madison as they teach is an exciting and enriching experience. Each student will find their place for learning in the presence of these gifted instructors," Donna M. Mitchell, the school's executive director, said.

To enroll, please call the school at 269-409-1191 or email schoolofamericanmusic@gmail.com. — STAFF REPORTS

SPORTS

From the Bleachers



COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

The accolade's keep pouring in for Bears general manager Ryan Poles.

He took over a dysfunctional organization and seems to have completely turned it around in three short years.

The first year, the team was really bad, and Poles decided not to spend any money or pursue any excellent free agents. Instead, he jettisoned Khalil Mack and Roquan Smith to free up even more cap space, and I think Poles wanted to make sure they didn't win too many games. Lovey Smith coached his team, the Houston Texans, to a victory the last week of the season giving the Bears the first pick in the draft.

Poles turned that pick into a lot of future picks, including the 10th pick last year and the first pick this year.

Now don't get me wrong, Ryan Poles hasn't been perfect, but he has been outstanding. This draft class will be the determining class, and it has the overwhelming support of both the critics and the fans.

On paper, the Bears are probably going to make the Playoffs this year and be Super Bowl contenders for the next decade.

As many of you know, I'm an optimist and a homer, but I'm doing my best to be realistic here. I believe both the Bears and Cubs will make the Playoffs this year and compete for a championship next season and for many seasons to come.

The Blackhawks are two or three years behind, and the Bulls and White Sox aren't on the championship radar at the moment.

Like the Bears, the Cubs are on the verge of becoming a championship contender.

Their lineup looks solid, and the starting pitching looks excellent and plentiful. The manager is top notch. The only weakness is the bullpen and when they can get that figured out, the playoffs should become an annual occurrence.

The Blackhawks got a break last year and took full advantage of it. They got a lucky draw in the draft and turned that into Connor Bedard, who will be 19 next season and ready to lead his fellow young teammates. Bedard is a special talent and the team has many talented youngsters in the pipeline so the Hawks should be back competing for a Stanley Cup in the near future.

It takes a great leader for an organization to become consistently relevant. Leadership is crucial both off and on the field.

Luck is also a major factor in the success of a franchise. You can do everything right and be set up for success but an injury can foil your plans. Acquiring a lot of good players, coaching them to be the best versions of themselves and putting them in a good position to win are just a few of the things that are necessary to build a championship team.

That, and a bunch of good players.

Charley Benetton said, "When you are looking at your mother, you are looking at the purest love you will ever know."

Be kind. Peace, love, and happiness.

Up and down Bison still hopeful in baseball season

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School boys' baseball team split two recent doubleheaders following a four game losing streak.

Head coach Adam Lijewski said he still feels good about his team's ability to compete in the upcoming District 4 post season tournament because of previous wins against teams joining them in the brackets.

Lijewski said there's even a chance at winning the tournament especially if his recently struggling hitters gets back on track to make up for a lack in pitching depth.

He said his hitters began the season on a mission to just try and make contact with the ball in or close to the strike zone.

Recently, though, Lijewski said the batters from overthinking, perhaps, are too often looking at strikes but swinging at bad pitches.

"When they miss that good pitch then they chase the next bad one," he said.

Lijewski said the team needs the offense to be running on all cylinders to overcome lack of pitching depth.

The ace of the staff, Jeffrey Tertel, has performed well as a strong armed freshman, but other pitchers have struggled to be consistent.

Tertel went the distance from the mound in the first game of a doubleheader May 14 at Michigan Lutheran, but the Bison lost 6 to 1.

Five of the runs given up were unearned.

The Bison (9-10) took the second game 8-5.

Ethan Lijewski drove in three of the runs while two of the other runs were knocked in by Hagen Davis and Nick Wolfe.

Lijewski, who was starting pitcher, was taken out of the game in the third inning after giving up three runs.

He had four strikeouts but walked six batters.

Giovanny Sanchez Perez pitched the rest of the game, recording four strike outs and just two walks.

The Bison split a doubleheader at Cassopolis on May 11.

New Buffalo won the first game 12-5 but lost the second game 17-9.

The previous day, the Bison also on the road were swept in a doubleheader 14-1 and 11-1 by a strong Brandywine team.

"They were just better than us," Lijewski said.

Right now, Lijewski said the team from lack of depth in the pitching staff has difficulty sweeping doubleheaders.

In fact, he said players who had not pitched all season took to the mound in two of the three recent doubleheaders to save the arms of his best throwers.

"We're staffed to be competitive, very competitive with anybody for one game and then after that it's tough," he said.

Lijewski said he feels a district title is within reach of the team, which has proven it can beat other tourney teams like Michigan Lutheran, River Valley and Our Lady of the Lake with victories over them during the regular season.

"We can battle with anybody in the district. We just have to get our bats going," he said.

I'm just a kid that defied the odds.
I'm just a kid that ignored the doubt.
I'm just a kid from a little place
in Dublin, Ireland, that went all the way.
— Conor McGregor

SCHOLASTICS

New Buffalo school board accepts resignation of elementary school principal

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education approved the resignation of Cassondra King, who was recently hired as elementary school principal, effective June 24, at their Monday, May 13, meeting.

King, who had been employed by Lakeshore Public Schools when she was hired as interim principal in January after board members accepted the previous principal's resignation, had been hired as principal at the board's April 22 meeting.

In a written statement read by board secretary Vanessa Thun, King said that "on paper, the drive and time away from my own family didn't seem like it would impact my family's needs but in reality, day to day life, it isn't working well for my personal family and my ability to be available to them."

"I've grown personally and professionally during this experience…This experience has taught me how much I value education, teaching and family," the statement said.

Rick Edgerle, school resource officer for the elementary school, gave board members an update.

Accomplishments for the district this year have included being awarded $54,000 in grant funding toward safety and security; Five Star window coatings being installed on all elementary interior windows/ middle and high school front entrances, with completion for all windows in the district (interior and exterior) slated for the end of June; emergency buckets and supplies in every elementary classroom thanks to the elementary PTO; implementing the Navigate 360 program, which Edgerle said is a safety app for phones that alerts them to who's missing from class or having issues, for emergency response to take effect next school year; installing LifeVac kits throughout the district and establishing safety plans and scheduling drills for the daycare center and after school BASE program.

Goals for next year include getting advanced active shooter training for all staff members, doing a CPR/First Aid training refresher for all staff and a district wide lockdown reunification drill.

All doors will have electronic keys and security cameras will be added to the middle/high school.

Board members heard updates from high school guidance counselor Lisa Price and elementary guidance counselor Angela Robertson, social worker Hilary Cunningham and elementary school social worker Tiffany Peters and student advocate Gerri Lucas.

Price gave the following statistics on the 37-member Class of 2024: 22 are members of the National Honor Society; 13 have earned STEM endorsements, five so far have earned Seals of Biliteracy, six have earned dual credits and completed certifications at AK Smith and one is a National Merit commended student.

The Class of 2024 has earned 242 college credits through Ivy Tech, Southwestern Michigan College, CLEP testing and AP testing.

Robertson said her main goal is to provide students Tier One prevention lessons, and that all students receive Whole Group Lessons from her.

She provided the following statistics: This year, 241 students received whole group lessons; 57 students received small group lessons; 51 students received individual counseling; 21 students received ongoing behavioral trauma; seven students and families received child study meetings and four students received Direct Observation and/or FBA Data Collection from Robertson.

Regarding PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) for the 2023-2024 school year, the elementary school has received Tier 1 state recognition. Students receive prizes and have raffles at PBIS assemblies to recognize their good behavior.

This year, Cunningham and Peters said that the middle/high school and elementary school collaborated through Class Catalyst, a Tier One intervention that's in place at the elementary school. The online platform measures students' energy level and mood to ensure their readiness to learn, as well as offers them prompts based on their level and mood. Teachers can connect and respond in real time.

This year, Cunningham said they worked in the elementary school primarily in Tier Two and Three. There were 15% of students who received Tier Two Group intervention, which is on par with the average. They ran 21 groups this year, and about 7% of students received individual intervention from Cunningham or Peters, which is typical of Tier Three.

Some groups offered this year were Changing Families, Emotional Regulation, Social Skills, Self Awareness, Relationship Skills and Executive Functioning.

Peters and Cunningham said they continue to collaborate with the community, having hosted a fall cyber safety presentation with Children's Advocacy Center. Anti-bullying speaker Tom Thelen presented to students and parents in February. New partnerships have included working with the Youth Advisory Council for holiday baskets in addition to Rotary Club, Neighbor by Neighbor and Women's Service League.

Lucas said that she has a list of middle and high school students who are designated as "At Risk" on Powerschool, and meets with principals, social workers and the counselor bi-weekly to report on grades and discuss how to assist these students.

As graduation coach, she follows all seniors to ensure they're on track to graduate.

As the Credit Recovery Teacher, she monitors student progress through Educere, reports back to the student and their parent/guardian about their progress and reminds them of the

date the class must be completed as well as administers the final exam for each course and emails the student, parent/guardian and the principal with the student's final grade and

completion of the course.

This year, approximately 37% middle school students received services from her this year, while approximately 42% high school received them (which doesn't include the additional students who are ELL

that she sees to translate for tests, finals and parent conferences).

The New Buffalo High School Graduation Rate prior to 2021 was 90%. In 2021-2022, 12 seniors started the year lacking up to eight credits each, but by the end of the year, the school had a 100% graduation rate.

The graduation rate for 2023-2024 is also 100%.

The Operation Agreement for participants involved in the LaPorte County Career and Technical Education Area Vocational District #6 was approved.

Board members authorized Tiffany Peters to submit a $25,000 Pokagon Grant application for the Mental Wellness Health Initiative.

Board members approved hiring Jonny Reinhardt for the position of radio manager/instructor/advisor for 2024-2025.

The administrative contracts for high school principal Tracy Ripley and middle school principal Dan Caudle were approved.

The one-year administrative contract for David Kelly was approved.

Board members approved the 2024-2025 elementary and high school handbooks.

The non-union work agreements for 2024-2025 were approved.

The following openings for School of Choice enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year were accepted: kindergarten, two; first grade, five; second grade, zero; third grade, zero; fourth grade, five; fifth grade, zero; sixth grade, five; seventh grade, five; eighth grade, five; ninth grade, five; 10th grade, five; 11th grade, five and 12th grade, zero.

Stabosz blames crossover vote for election defeat

BY STAN MADDUX

La Porte County Auditor and former candidate for La Porte County Commissioner Tim Stabosz believes there was an effort by his critics to stop him from gaining the republican nomination for commissioner

However, Stabosz said he felt the primary reason for his loss was Democrats crossing over "in droves" to vote republican, but not against him for the most part.

In addition, Stabosz said he believes the crossing over by Democrats had more to do with

lack of interest from the party having just one contested county government race and desire to help state Sen. Mike Bohacek of Michiana Shores.

"This is not a repudiation of Tim Stabosz by any means," he said.

Leading up to Tuesday's election, some public officials purchased blocks of airtime on local radio stations to denounce Stabosz, a central figure as LaPorte County Auditor in the ongoing heated conflict within county government.

An anonymous five-page flyer depicting Stabosz as incompetent, a source of chaos and hatred along with king maker for most local republicans nowadays also began showing up in mailboxes and on social media.

"Stop the madness" and "time to clean the toxic environment" are among the writings on the front page of the flyer.

Steve Holfield, a farmer from Mill Creek, defeated Stabosz by more than 500 votes to gain the Republican Party nomination for the District 2 seat on the three member LaPorte County Commission.

LaPorte County Republican Party Chairman Allen Stevens said at least 700 Republican ballots were pulled by people who cast democratic ballots in the 2022 primary.

Stevens said it's difficult to say what the motive was for such a high crossover but many times it has to do with democrats wanting weaker republican opponents in the November general election.

Bohacek, a former Democrat, won the party's nomination for a third term in the State Senate District 8 race.

Stabosz said he felt another contributing factor in his defeat was "the false and malicious attacks by his political enemies to misrepresent my record and the truth."

All but one of the candidates Stabosz backed in the primary also lost, including his Chief Deputy Auditor Rhonda Graves.

Graves was defeated by LaPorte County Councilman Mike Rosenbaum in the Republican race for auditor by 11 percentage points.

Stabosz said his focus now is on serving the remainder of his term as LaPorte County Auditor, which expires on Jan. 1, and supporting Holifield in the upcoming campaign.

Holifield will face retired LaPorte County Police officer Mike Kellems, who ran unopposed for the Democratic Party nomination.

"We both agreed that we'll be courteous and nice to each other and run on the facts," he said.

The extreme political infighting began after Stabosz and Commissioner Joe Haney took office nearly three and a half years ago.

Most of their allegations have involved ongoing claims of political corruption and county government being run by a good old boys' club, resulting in fiery exchanges mostly during commission meetings.

The commissioners have also sued Stabosz twice for not complying with their orders to pay certain legal expenses.

Stabosz claimed he withheld payments until he verified the expenses were legitimate.

He also accused Commission President Connie Gramarossa of being responsible for the political flyers.

Gramarossa denied having anything to do with the publications.

"We haven't had the type of chaos and destruction in the county since they both took office and that is the truth," she said.

LaPorte Mayor Tom Dermody, who has often called for an end to the political fighting, said he felt most voters tired of the negativity spoke their minds at the polls.

"It's great to see those individuals winning that just want to get stuff done. Enough of the crap. I think it's a good day for good government," he said.

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City of St. Joseph Mayor Brook Thomas waves to the crowd

The Michiana Clowns entertain along the route

The Berrien County Sheriff's Honor Guard marches in the parade

The Youth Parade Float rides in the parade

Retired sheriff Paul Bailey, the grand marshal, waves to the crowd

The Star Wars-themed Bridgman float makes an appearance

Sam the Wheeler stuns the crowd along the parade route

The Baroda Royalty's Egg Hunt-themed float rides along the route

The Coloma Royal Court float rides along the parade route

Patriotic cheer was in full swing along the parade route

Celebrating a Grand Floral Parade in St. Joseph and Benton Harbor

BY FRANCESA SAGALA

Spring was in full bloom in southwest Michigan during the 118th annual Blossomtime Grand Floral Parade in St. Joseph and Benton Harbor Saturday, May 11.

The parade featured over 100 units, which included community floats, including bands, floats, clowns, costumed characters, antique cars and tractors, unicycle teams, equestrian units, bands and color guards from area schools, and the famed Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Motorcycle Drill Team. Special guests included Grand Marshal Paul Bailey, City of Benton Harbor Mayor Marcus Muhammad, City of St. Joseph Mayor Laura Goos and state representatives and senators.

This year, the New Buffalo Royal Court garnered the Twin Cities' Award for their ice cream-themed float. The Board of Directors Award went to the Three Oaks/River Valley Royal Court and the Queen's Award went to the Bridgman Royal Court.

The 2.5-mile parade begins at Pearl and Main streets in St. Joseph and runs along Main Street to Ship Street before continuing over the Bicentennial Bridge into Benton Harbor, where it heads down Main Street South Haven royalty waves to the crowd and ends at 5th Street.

Junior Teen Blossomtime and Bud Prince and Princesses ride in the parade

St. Joseph Royalty rides on their float in the annual parade

Berrien County Sheriff's Department Mounted Division makes an appearance

Blossomtime Royalty waves from their float

The Michiana Clowns entertain along the route

The St. Joseph High School Band marches in the parade

The Benton Harbor High School Band closes the parade

Volunteer of the Year Laura Stuckey waves to the crowd

The New Buffalo Royal Court's float garners the Twin Cities' Award

The Bridgman High School Band marches in the parade

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Motorcycle Drill Team opens the parade

The Three Oaks and River Valley Royalty's float rides along the route

The New Buffalo Royal Court float makes an appearance

The Hartford Royalty float rides along the parade route

The Benton Harbor Royal Court float closes the parade

The River Valley High School Band marches in the parade

State Rep. Joey Andrews waves to the crowd

Paradegoers stood when the Lest We Forget unit appeared

Costumed characters made an appearance along the route

Benton Harbor Mayor Marcus Muhammed waves to the crowd

Annexation opens door to industrial park expansion

BY STAN MADDUX

The Thomas Rose Industrial Park in LaPorte is being expanded again from a recent annexation by the city.

The annexation approved by the city council on May 6 consists of 92 acres of farmland owned by developer Bob Qualls, who requested it to have the property served by municipal water and sewer.

Municipal utility service is prohibited from being extended outside the city limits under an ordinance adopted under the administration of Blair Milo, who was mayor from 2012 to 2017.

"I think he recognizes that you're not a real player in the industrial market unless you're served by utilities. That access to utilities is absolutely essential to any industrial development so they're positioning themselves to be successful long term at the site," said Bert Cook, executive director of the La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership.

Qualls owns another 17 acres of undeveloped land already in the city that will be part of the expansion of the park, he said.

About three years ago, Qualls built a 150,000 square foot spec building fully occupied and leased by Gravure Ink and American Renolit Corporation.

Gravure Ink makes a thin paper containing various designs resembling primarily the grain on trees such as maple, hickory, cherry and oak.

The designs on paper are shipped to be glued on plywood and particle board panels used in products like cabinetry.

The rest of the spec building is used by American Renolit Corporation for storage.

The La Porte based company is a maker of plastic films at its manufacturing facility at 1207 E. Lincolnway.

The films are used in graphics, signage and the labeling industry.

Construction by Qualls of a second spec building at the park also for light industrial use is in the process of likely being finished by fall, Cook said.

Cook said he's not sure how the newly annexed property will specifically be used but feels light industry similar to what's already in the park will go up on the land.

"That would be the likeliest scenario," he said.

Cook said he doesn't expect any problems with attracting industry to the site once water and sewer lines are extended a short distance from the park to the expanded area.

He said there's rail service for transport of supplies and product to and from the companies along with a NIPSCO substation at the park to meet demand for electricity.

"It makes for really nice sites that are well served by utilities," he said.

Qualls is owner of Qualls Development Group, which leases industrial space to companies at four different locations in La Porte, Rolling Prairie and Knox.

The company was founded in 1992 when Qualls purchased the old American Home Foods building at Indiana 2 and Fail Road on the city's east side.

The 400,000 square facility is now home to Harper Collins Publishing. Other buildings owned by the firm include one on Fail Road occupied by Alpha Baking Co.

Work on developing the Thomas Rose Industrial Park on the city's northeast side dates back to the 1990s.

It grew from just over 100 acres to 344 acres from expansions in 2008 and 2015 before the latest addition to the grounds.

Cook said there are about 20 companies at the park employing roughly 1,000 people.

There was only about 50 acres of undeveloped ground at the park before the annexation.

"It's been a good project for the city," he said.

In early March, the city annexed the 39 North Conservancy District consisting of mostly industrial and residential development on about 960 acres of land.

The city plans to increase water capacity at the newly incorporated property to meet demand from new development anticipated from the future water system upgrades, which are presently in the design stage, Cook said.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE New Buffalo Times — SINCE 1942 —

OBITUARIES

Carol Beatrice Vavra

1963-2024

Carol Beatrice Vavra, 60, of Three Oaks, passed away peacefully Friday, May 3, 2024, in her home.

Her life began October 30, 1963, in Michigan City, Indiana, the youngest of five children born to Richard and Geraldine Vavra.

Carol navigated life with a great sense of positivity, embodying kindness, and compassion. She was known for her welcoming smile, warm heart, homemade apple pie, and her ability to dominate at euchre. Carol cherished her three children and four grandchildren. She dedicated her life to being a wonderful mother and grandmother. She found joy in baking and planting flowers in the spring. She was the happiest when surrounded by family and friends.

Carol will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by one daughter, Sarah Keen of Three Oaks; two sons, Kevin Keen of Three Oaks,

Alex (Sandra) Keen of Galien; four grandchildren, Freya Mooney, Rowan Mooney, Atticus Warren, Ellie Bea Keen; three sisters, Donna (Richard) Vavra-Musser of Stevensville, Mary Vavra of Three Oaks and Irene Vavra Sinner of Three Oaks; one brother, Andy (Gloria) Vavra of Three Oaks; and a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Family and friends will gather for a Celebration of Life on June 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. in Watkins Memorial Park, 3 West Locust Street, Three Oaks, Michigan 49128.

Carol will be laid to rest in Pine Grove Cemetery, New Buffalo.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

ST. MARY OF THE LAKE FAMILY FESTIVAL COMING NEXT WEEKEND

Formally known as the "kickoff to summer" in the Southwest Michigan area for more than 25 years, this year's St. Mary of the Lake Family Festival will take place Thursday through Monday, May 23-27, at 718 W. Buffalo Street in New Buffalo.

The carnival provider, Anderson Midways, will have food, games and carnival rides for all ages. Additional food vendors will also be available.

Advance tickets are $20 until May 19, and all-access, single day wristband sales are available at the event for $25 each.

Hours of operation will be from 4-10 p.m. Thursday, May 23; noon to 10 p.m. Friday through Sunday, May 24-26 and noon to 4 p.m. (weather permitting) Monday, May 27.

Please also visit the Snack Shack and bake sale, which will be sponsored by the Altar & Rosary Society (ARS). The ARS will be having a silent auction from 1-7 p.m. Friday, May 24; noon to 7 p.m. Saturday, May 25 and noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, May 26.

For more information, visit www.stmarynewbuffalo.com or the Michigan website at www.michigan.org/event/st-mary-lake-family-festival-0. — STAFF REPORTS

RIBBON-CUTTING TO WELCOME COMMUNITY-MINDED APPAREL STORE GLIK'S TO NEW BUFFALO

The Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce will perform a ribbon cutting ceremony at 9 a.m. Thursday, May 23, to celebrate the grand opening of the family-owned Glik's in New Buffalo. The event will take place at 26 N Whittaker Street and will feature day-long activities to celebrate the occasion, which is open to the public.

Glik's always considers the needs of the community when opening a new store. Providing service is at the core of their retail business, giving back to the community is also essential. As part of the celebration, Glik's will be donating money to the non-profit New Buffalo Railroad Museum which helped provide historic images of New Buffalo for display in the store.

The store is curated to carry brands and styles that are specifically chosen for New Buffalo customers. They are confident you'll find something special at each visit.

"The building is beautiful and we are excited to be in this historic location. We take pride in our long-standing history and the relationships we have built within our communities," Kristi Ham said.

Glik's has served the Midwest for over 127 years-treating everyone like family. They strive to meet your needs through excellent service, great product selection, and affordable pricing.

For more information, visit www.gliks.com, social media or call 618-876-6717. — STAFF REPORTS

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New leadership in store for LaPorte County Democrats

BY STAN MADDUX

The LaPorte County Democratic Party is looking for a new chairman after its leader resigned.

Angela Henzman, who had been party chairman since December of 2022, said her decision had nothing to do with more than twice as many republican ballots cast than democratic ballots in the May 7 primary.

The Michigan City area woman said she stepped down to dedicate herself more to her bid to become the next La Porte County Clerk.

Henzman, who is the democratic nominee after running unopposed in the primary, is facing republican incumbent Heather Stevens in the November general election.

Stevens also did not have a challenger for a second term in the primary.

"I am going to give someone else the opportunity to lead the party while I focus my attention on my campaign for clerk," she said.

According to the clerk's office, there were close to 8,000 Republican ballots pulled compared to slightly more than 3,000 ballots cast by Democrats.

Historically, the numbers between the parties are much more even in LaPorte County during primaries.

Henzman said she felt the disparity had to do with the Democratic Party having just one contested race for three county council at-large seats compared to the Republican Party, which had challengers in many races such as governor, state senate and county commissioner.

There were also a number of primary races without democratic candidates.

She said democrats, Qiana Edwards for LaPorte County Auditor and Camille Merriweather for LaPorte County Recorder, have since been slated to run for those offices in the general election.

More Democratic candidates are expected to be slated for the general election in other races where republicans are currently unopposed.

"Though we did not have many contested races in the primary, the Democratic ticket is full of strong candidates and I believe that will be reflected in the fall election," she said.

She replaced Dr. Vidya Kora, who resigned after expressing disappointment at the poor showing by most LaPorte County democrats in the November general election of 2022.

At the time, Kora said support of former republican president Donald Trump in LaPorte County was still strong, if not, growing at a time when his support nationwide seemed to begin weakening.

Henzman, 39, said her legacy as party chairman will mostly be about her commitment to inclusion and diversity.

"My goal was to open the party to those who had previously felt excluded such as women, minorities, young people and the LGBTQ community," she said.

Henzman said providing support for candidates in areas like fund raising and campaign finance requirements also rank high on the mark she left on the party along with equal treatment of all party candidates in primaries.

"We really wanted to give candidates the tools they needed to be successful," she said.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE New Buffalo Times — SINCE 1942 —

Full rail service coming to fruition at Kingsbury Industrial Park

BY STAN MADDUX

A longtime dream of Kingsbury Industrial Park being fully served by two major railroads is about to become reality.

Recently, CSX train cars began entering the 8,000 acre park on a new rail extension about one mile from its main line.

For years, Canadian National has provided rail service to Kingsbury Elevator on the far northern edge of the park beside U.S. 35.

CSX and CN will be able to serve the entire park once the last two rail connections in a network of newly installed lines are made possibly before the end of the month.

Matt Reardon, director for the Office of Economic Development for La Porte County government, said the final rail connections will create a loop to allow both railroads to reach the entire grounds.

"It's pretty exciting," he said.

It's taken a dozen or more years to work through a complicated web of legal issues, landowner disputes, financing and other barriers to lay down all of the rail necessary for the two major railroads to serve the entire park and potentially attract major employers.

"There are distribution companies, data center companies that are actively looking at Kingsbury," Reardon said.

The rail was laid on the footprint of an old CSX line that once served the Kingsbury Ordnance Plant, which made explosives for the military during World War II.

One of the most recent accomplishments to make rail service possible was construction of a new train bridge over Travis Ditch.

Former La Porte County government attorney Shaw Friedman was involved in the process of bringing full service rail to the park from the very beginning until last year.

"This has been a tremendous collaborative effort by a lot of folks in county government, both parties working together arm in arm to make this a reality. It's a very exciting time," he said.

Friedman also said everyone involved should be credited for not giving up when the task almost seemed impossible from the hold-ups encountered on what turned out to be a long, frustrating path.

"This is a great example of what happens when people put aside their differences, whether it's political differences or anything else, to get a common goal," he said.

Friedman also credited the state for its financial support to do things such as complete the rail connections.

"This is the culmination of a lot of work by a lot of people and I'm proud to have played a role in it," he said.

Leigh Morris was involved with the rail project when he worked for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and the Indiana Department of Transportation a few years after his term as mayor of La Porte ended in 2007.

For years, Morris said the park has been served by the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad, which has a much shorter reach than two major railroads with the ability to access rail shipments from all over the nation.

Morris said one of the difficult to jump hurdles was convincing CSX to run a connection from its main line into the park.

"They didn't want to make the investment necessary and didn't wish to disrupt their main line with another side connection, but they've been convinced that this is going to be good for them and I think it'll be a very good thing for the Kingsbury industrial site," he said.

HOROSCOPE

MAY 16-22, 2024

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

The vibe for you this week will have a harmonizing affect. This is the time to reach out and settle differences, form truces and hammer out differences. Let relationships be reinforced by facing hardships or worries together. There is a stability that comes from having a strong friendship now.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

This is the time to be more dynamic and influential with partners and coworkers. You are not just here to go along for the ride. You have a personal stake in things now. You would benefit a lot by being more vocal about where you want to go and what you need. Speak up.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

Be on the lookout for double meanings and omens this week. Be aware that there is a lot happening behind the scenes and you may need to be a little subversive to get all the pertinent information. This is not the time to make off handed comments or brush things off. Pay attention to details.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

You will be ready to dig in and work more closely with others now. When you move into a more private space, away from the intrusion of others, you will get to know someone much better. It's time to let your guard down, move away from the crowd, and get closer to someone.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

There is a nice 'pick me up' kind of vibe to the week. Not only will your physical energies rise, but your mental awareness will be more attuned, helping you handle paperwork and anything that requires attention to details. This is the time to get moving and solve complicated issues.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

It's important that you tune into what motivates you and keeps your creative juices flowing. Zap negative people and their energy draining viewpoints. Don't listen to the nay say-ers. Stay focused on what's important to you and do what it takes to stay on top of things.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

Use the stellar energy this week to be more demonstrative and emotional. This is the time to let your guard down and tell people how you feel about things. Your perspective on sticky emotional connections can really help other people see the truth. So, if they ask, go ahead and tell them.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

The winds of change are blowing and this time they will help you make things around your home more stable and secure. So, open those windows and let things get stirred up. Things will fall into place after you mix it up first. This is the time to open up to new possibilities.

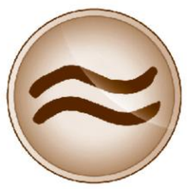
SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

The vibe coming in this week will help you identify which of the goals you have are achievable, and which ones are made of hot air. Release yourself from illusions and do what it takes to get you on the right track. Start at the beginning, take those first steps and the rest will follow.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

There are some big-ticket items you may need to purchase now and it's important you separate out your feelings about it before purchasing. Sometimes we think we need things based on our ego, rather than true necessity. Before you make any big purchases really investigate why you're buying it.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



Pay very close attention to your gut feelings this week. Don't brush those apprehensive vibes off. Investigate feelings of anxiety. They could be the thing that ques you into what is really keeping you from moving forward. Inner fears that go unchecked can really knock you off track.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

There are some deeper issues that you will be facing on your own this week and talking with friends can help lighten that load now. Sharing your experiences will help you realize that you are stronger than you think, and that you have already made it through the worst.

The wicked envy and hate; it is their way of admiring.
— Victor Hugo

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		1			6			
			4	5		3		
6	4				1			2
4	5				7			
				2				6
	3					8		
3			5				8	
8	1	2						5
								7

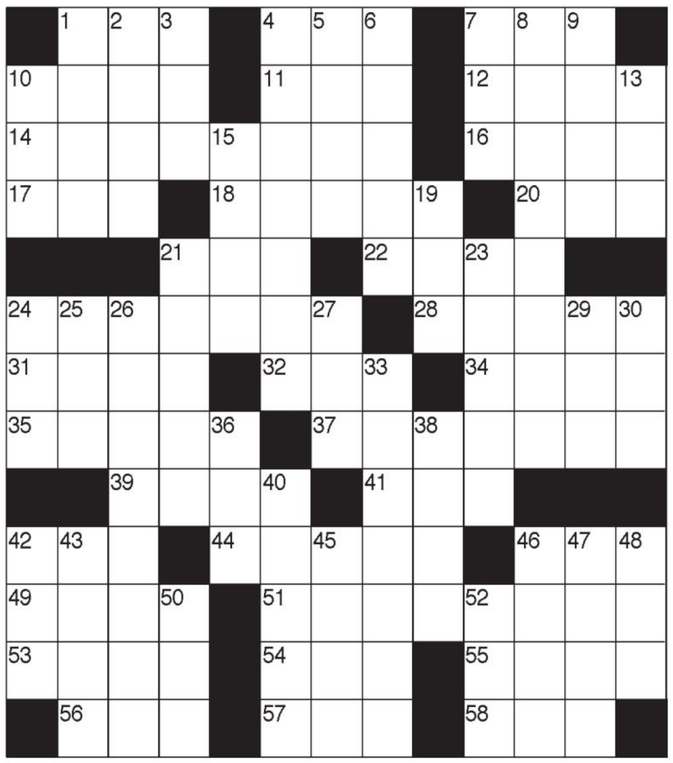
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Limited (abbr.)
4 Bachelor of Engineering in Mines (abbr.)
7 Atl. Coast Conference (abbr.)
10 Agricultural establishment
11 Grape
12 Fahrenheit (abbr.)
14 Large number
16 Silly smile
17 Irregular moving part
18 SW Alaskan native
20 Old Provencal (abbr.)
21 Abatement
22 Legal
24 Destroyed
28 Loose
31 Few (pref.)
32 Wish undone
34 Broad structural basin
35 Clemenceau's nickname
37 Patient
39 Den
41 Spread to dry hay
42 Master of Science in Engineering (abbr.)
44 Oriental country
46 Queen's bishop's pawn (abbr.)
49 Eight (Ital.)
51 Exclusive possession
53 Insane (arch.)
54 Adjective-forming (suf.)
55 Highest point
56 Dry (pref.)
57 Ike
58 Son of Ra

DOWN

1 Byron poem
2 Prune
3 Doctor of Modern Languages (abbr.)
4 Constructor
5 Bacchanalian cry
6 Siberian wild cat
7 Afghanistan (abbr.)
8 Spree
9 Nick
10 Federal Trade Commission (abbr.)
13 Royal Naval Reserve (abbr.)
15 Language (abbr.)
19 Egyptian god of the sky
21 Tidal bore
23 Toward center
24 Lose freshness
25 Adopted son of Mohammed
26 Play
27 Driving under the influence (abbr.)
29 Hebrew judge
30 Youngster
33 Agreement
36 Comparative ending
38 Official negation
40 Suited to the occasion
42 Master of Hounds (abbr.)
43 Hades river
45 Cohere
46 19th Hebrew letter
47 Blue (Fr.)
48 Church box
50 Across (poet.)
52 Steps in ballet



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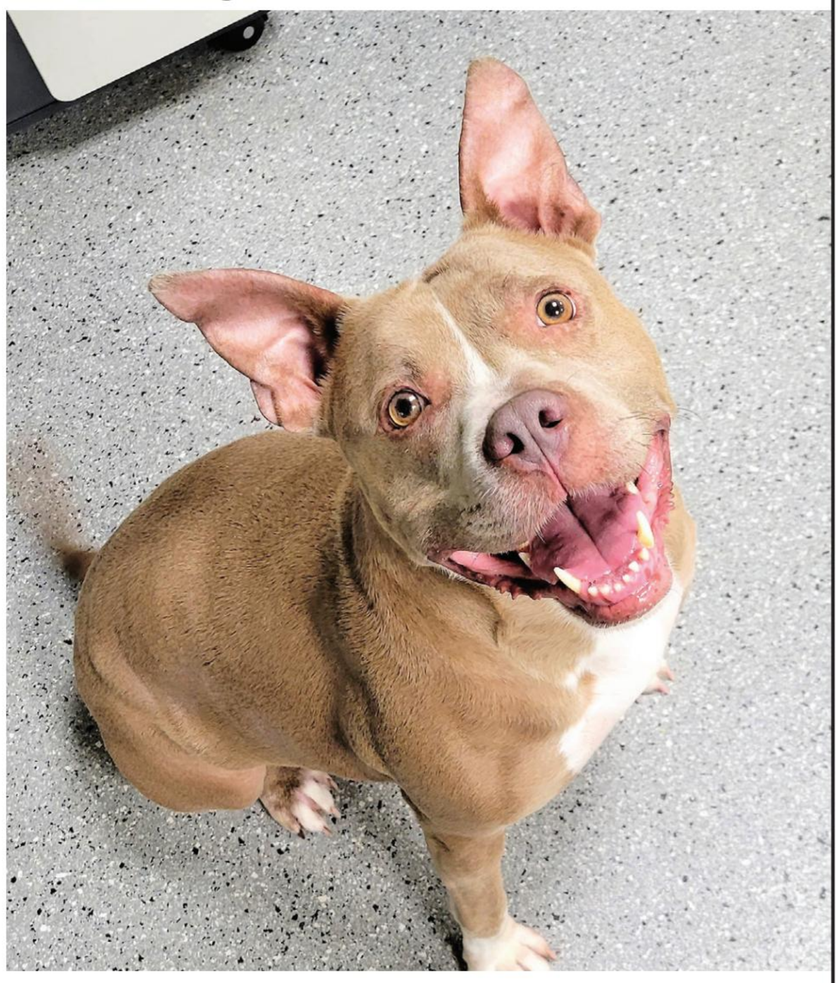

This short little 65-pound happy hippo look-a-like is Diamond. Nothing would make us happier than seeing walk out our front doors in her "ADOPTED" collar with an adopter who loves her.

Diamond's adoption fee has been sponsored to an approved applicant. We can't think of any other reason that she may have been overlooked for nearly a year now other than she arrived with skin allergies and does much better eating Hills Science Diet: Sensitive Skin and Stomach. She also loves sweet potato treats. Other than needing a specific food, we don't know why she hasn't been adopted. She just needs someone to see how wonderful she is...

If your children, about eight years or older, need a best friend, Diamond has done wonderful with kids about that age. If you need a best friend, she has been the most loyal dog to each of us staff and volunteers at the shelter. Diamond is wiggly, she's friendly and she's the happiest girl. All she needs is someone to see what we see.

When it comes to other dogs, her best interactions have been with male dogs who have her energy level. She seems to enjoy running and zooming for a bit, then she is good to just chill and relax. If you don't have any other pets in the home, that is totally fine for her, too.

When we're outside with her, she'll get short spurts of energy. She makes us laugh because her sprints aren't exactly of normal zooming speed, but she sure tries! Once she has exercised, she turns into her usual couch-potato self and rolls over for belly rubs and will kerplop onto your lap for cuddles and affection.

She knows how to sit and if you tell her to "take nicely," she takes treats ever so gently. Diamond doesn't miss a chance to ask someone to pet her. She is very much a "people-y" type of dog. As long as she has her person, she's a happy sweetie pie. She'll go around to each person in the room over and over again just to be near everyone.

We think she'd also enjoy a walk at the beach or a neighborhood stroll, and then curling up on the couch next to you to watch TV. That's what she does at the shelter! Runs and plays outside then comes up to the office for a nap. We just adore her. She'll be a wonderful family dog. She has done awesome on FetchSomeFun field trips, too!

We hope you stop by for a visit to adopt her. She is about six years old, is spayed, and we think the only reason she must still be available is because she is waiting for you.

Michiana Humane Society is located at 722 SR-212 in Michigan City. The phone number is 219-872-4499, and their website is www.michianapets.org. — STAFF REPORTS

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FOR SALE

1985 Posillipo Technema 38' to be sold at auction on May 18, 2024 at Oselka Marina, 514 W Water St, New Buffalo, MI 49117

2001 Carver 39' to be sold at auction on May 28, 2024, at Oselka Marina, 514 W. Water St, New Buffalo, MI 49117.

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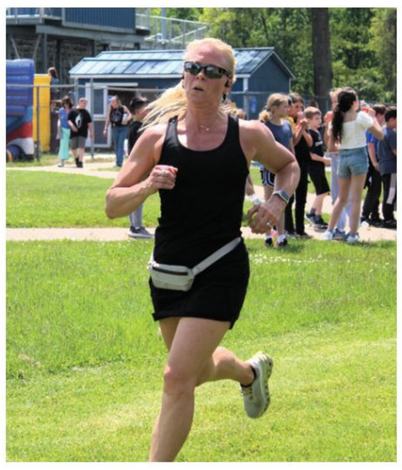
Retiring teachers Barb Reed and Maria Churchill are recognized on the multiplex

August Johnson races with his track coach, Nate Jones

Students and teachers walk and run along the track

Erica Johnson finishes as the female winner



High school teacher Nick Talbott takes a turn in the dunking tank

Students, teachers race to 'make cancer extinct'

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

In 2016, New Buffalo Area Schools launched the annual New Buffalo "Make Cancer Extinct" 5K to recognize Maria Chruchill, a third grade teacher at New Buffalo Elementary School who'd just triumphed over a cancer diagnosis.

Eight years later, Churchill continues to be cancer free after undergoing surgery and continuing to travel to the Mayo Clinic for testing, has returned to running and working out and is gearing up for retirement.

Churchill, along with retiring elementary school teacher Barb Reed,were both honored before the seventh annual 5K at the middle/high school's multiplex Monday, May 13.

Per a statement that was read by students Meredith Johnson, Katiah Vosberg and Shawna Yech, student council members will remember Churchill's Popcorn Days, Hats On Day and other activities "she championed to create a happy, vibrant and engaging school environment."

Churchill's colleagues also "witnessed her unwavering dedication behind the scenes, ensuring that every child received the support they needed to thrive."

"Ms. Churchill, your enthusiasm and morning dance routines in the hallways will be sorely missed…As you step into retirement, we hope you continue dancing through life, leaving a trail of joy and inspiration wherever you go," the students read.

Fifth grade teacher Reed has been an educator at New Buffalo for just short of half a century and has taught a variety of grade levels and nearly 1,000 students.

Students remember Reed for making their year "memorable" and "fun," even through a pandemic, as well as for being a "good human with a big heart," lunch in their classroom, visits to the school store and breaks outside.

"These may all seem like small and insignificant moments to an outsider but to us, Mrs. Reed's fifth grade, they were everything," read.

Proceeds from the event went to Berrien County Cancer Service.

Students purchased T-shirts, which were designed by Danika Loeffler, and filled out dinosaur cutouts to honor someone who has fought or is currently fighting cancer.

Money was also raised through concession stand sales, the dunk tank, middle/high school snack sales during advisory periods and "Coins for Cancer" during advisory periods. The high school raised $161.91, with first place going to the sophomores for collecting $92.31 in quarters. Second place was the freshmen, who raised $42.80; third place was the seniors, who raised $16.68 and fourth place was the juniors, who raised $10.12. First place in the middle school went to the sixth graders for raising $427.05; second place went to the seventh grade, which raised $254 and eighth graders won third place at $199.13.

The event was planned by the high school senate and the middle/high school SADD groups and their sponsors. The cafeteria staff helped with food preparation,with ice cream being donated by Tina Brewster and Nancy's. Live entertainment was provided by Jammin' With Jerry. The New Buffalo Township Fire Department filled the dunk tank.

The event was kickstarted with the 5K, with Nate Jones, the track coach, and Vance Price, the cross country coach, having helped mark the course and with the timing system.

Tied for first place was Jones and August Johnson, a freshman who's on the track team, with a time of 18:48.

"He's doing amazing work - he's destined for big things," Jones said.

Mom Erica Johnson, who teaches physical education at the elementary school was the first female to cross the finish line at 24:30.

"I can't catch my son but that's okay,"s he said, adding that it's a "fun race for all people."

Students jump rope and hula hoop as part of the festivities

Katie Tierney makes bubbles with Quinn Earley and Arjen Lawhorn

Students enjoy free ice cream

Students and teachers are off to the races

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